

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2011

Using Student Reponse Systems to Encourage Interaction

Are you looking for ways to get students actively engaged in class? Particularly useful in large instructional settings, a student response system may be a beneficial solution for you.

The Bookshelf

Team-Based Learning: A Transformative Use of Small Groups in College Teaching

ITAS Colloquia Series

ITAS is sponsoring a colloquia series highlighting the 2010 award winners for Excellence in Teaching and the Creative Teaching Grant. Convening on the final Wednesday of each month throughout the spring term, an award recipient will discuss his/her dream course or grant project.

Event Spotlight

Navigating the Human Subjects Review Process – The Sponsored Programs Office, Immersive Learning Committee, and ITAS have joined forces to sponsor this workshop.

Services Spotlight

Midterm Feedback Service – One of the most valuable ways to improve your teaching is with feedback from our students. Increase feedback effectiveness by collecting information midway through the semester.

Upcoming Events

Workshops, seminars, and trainings throughout the month of February

Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship
www.bsu.edu/itas

Using Student Response Systems to Encourage Interaction

Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship

Perhaps the toughest part of teaching is getting students actively engaged in class, particularly in large classroom settings. One solution comes through the use of student response systems. Commonly referred to as "clickers," these small handheld units allow students to electronically respond to questions in class. The teacher plugs a receiver into the classroom computer and uses the accompanying software to record student answers while asking questions in class, often in conjunction with PowerPoint slides. With a little practice, the process can become fairly seamless during the lecture, students get engaged by answering questions, and the teacher ends up with valuable data about student understanding. Here are a few specific ways these devices can be useful.

Real-time assessment of understanding

During the course of a lecture, the teacher can ask a series of questions to gauge student understanding of a topic. Students click in their answers, and within a few seconds, the results are available in the form of a bar chart. If most students answered correctly, the teacher can move onto the next topic. If enough students answer incorrectly, material can be reviewed as needed.

Discussion and re-clicking

Rather than identifying the correct answer immediately after students click in, the teacher can engage students in discussion about why they selected a particular answer. After a bit of discussion or debate, the question can be posed again, giving students a chance to select a different answer based on the new information or challenges provided. Then the correct answer can be revealed and the underlying concepts explained.

Paired or group answering

A further level of interaction among students can be fostered by having pairs or small groups of students discuss particular questions before they answer. This discussion forces students to negotiate, justify, and defend their answers—a process that encourages active and critical

thinking. Teachers using clickers have reported that this approach leads to friendly competition within the class as groups try to outdo one another.

Quizzes and self-tests

While these devices lend themselves to quick, embedded assessments during the course of a lecture, they can also be used to give in-class quizzes. High-stakes testing is not recommended, but short quizzes can encourage reading or help students get a handle on which concepts they understand and which they should study more.

Anonymous polling

In some classes, it is important to gather information from students about certain opinions, perceptions, or behaviors—think about asking how many students in a health class have engaged in binge drinking or used illegal drugs within the past month. We cannot ask for a show of hands in those cases, but students can answer honestly and confidentially with clickers, leading to class discussion about the patterns that are revealed. Many clicker systems have an anonymous mode that keeps even the teacher from knowing how individuals answered, but if that mode isn't available, simply asking students to swap clickers with someone nearby provides the desired level of anonymity.

Class attendance and participation bonuses

Many of these clicker-based activities can also be used for taking attendance; if students answered questions, they were there (although there is always the potential of clicker-loaning, as well as for clever ways to defeat it). Some systems, like i>clicker, allow teachers to designate how many points—or fractions of a point—to provide for simply answering the questions, along with a bonus for answering correctly. This allows for attendance to be taken, points to be given for participation, and a bonus to be given for careful preparation.

Connections to Blackboard and Gradebook

Most clicker systems can input class rosters and output student results to course management systems like Blackboard, and generic report formats (e.g. CSV files) can usually be imported the Ball State's Web Gradebook. This allows teachers to provide points for in-class clicker activities, then transfer data over to their online gradebook programs.

Things to consider when implementing clickers

- Make sure clicker use is fully integrated into how you run the class, not just as a few added-on questions. Use the clickers as a way to get at student thinking, not simply whether or not they get the right answer.
- Use clickers consistently from the start of the semester in order to demonstrate their importance—and to let students feel like they are getting their money's worth (they typically cost between \$20-40).
- Practice using the clicker software beforehand so your lectures are relatively seamless. The key is to keep the students' focus on the ideas and concepts, not the technology. ITAS has some demo units from i>clicker, so see if we can loan you a few extra clickers for a practice session.
- Have policies in place for lost or forgotten clickers; it is certain to happen sometime during the semester.
- See if your textbook comes with clicker-ready question banks or if the book can be ordered with a clicker combo. But get familiar with the clicker system and don't adopt one based entirely on this combo deal.
- Ball State University has adopted i>clicker as our officially supported student response system. That means faculty members using this technology are *encouraged* to use i>clickers, but you are still free to use other systems if they better meet your needs. ITAS provides training support to faculty members using i>clicker in their courses. See our [i>clicker page](#) for specific information.

More information

- A literature review article, [*Clickers in the Large Classroom: Current Research and Best-Practice Tips*](#), on different aspect of the use of clickers in large classes
- Derek Bruff, author of [*Teaching with Classroom Response Systems: Creating Active Learning Environments*](#), now has a [blog](#) by the same name
- Websites of three leading student response system technologies:
 - [i>clicker](#)
 - [TurningPoint](#)
 - [eInstruction](#)

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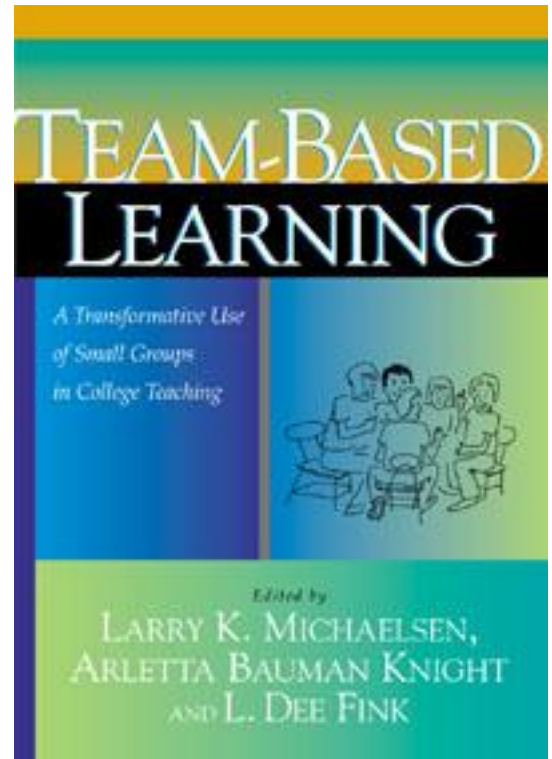
THE BOOKSHELF

TEAM-BASED LEARNING: A TRANSFORMATIVE USE OF SMALL GROUPS IN COLLEGE TEACHING

Michaelsen, Larry K., Knight, Arletta Bauman, and L. Dee Fink. *Team-Based Learning: A Transformative Use of Small Groups in College Teaching*. Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2004.

“ . . .team-based learning has two special features that make it distinctive. The first is the unusual capability that *teams* have, as compared to *groups*. The second is the relative power of a teaching *strategy*, compared to a teaching *technique*.” (p. 4)

This book describes team-based learning (TBL), an unusually powerful and versatile teaching strategy that enables teachers to take small group learning to a whole new level of effectiveness. It is the only pedagogical use of small groups that is based on a recognition of the critical difference between "groups" and "teams", and intentionally employs specific procedures to transform newly-formed groups into high performance learning teams.



This book is a complete guide to implementing TBL in a way that will promote the deep learning all teachers strive for. This is a teaching strategy that promotes critical thinking, collaboration, mastery of discipline knowledge, and the ability to apply it.

Part I covers the basics, beginning with an analysis of the relative merits and limitations of small groups and teams. It then sets out the processes, with much practical advice, for transforming small groups into cohesive teams, for creating effective assignments and thinking through the implications of team-based learning.

In Part II teachers from disciplines as varied as accounting, biology, business, ecology,

chemistry, health education and law describe their use of team-based learning. They also demonstrate how this teaching strategy can be applied equally effectively in environments such as large classes, mixed traditional and on-line classes, and with highly diverse student populations.

Part III offers a synopsis of the major lessons to be learned from the experiences of the teachers who have used TBL, as described in Part II. For teachers contemplating the use of TBL, this section provides answers to key questions, e.g., whether to use team-based learning, what it takes to make it work effectively, and what benefits one can expect from it—for the teacher as well as for the learners.

The appendices answer frequently asked questions, include useful forms and exercises, and offer advice on peer evaluations and grading. A related Web site that allows readers to “continue the conversation,” view video material, access indexed descriptions of applications in various disciplines and post questions further enriches the book. The editors’ claim that team-based instruction can transform the quality of student learning is fully supported by the empirical evidence and examples they present. An important book for all teachers in higher education.

from styluspub.com

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ITAS Colloquia Series

Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship is sponsoring a spring colloquia series highlighting the 2010 award winners for Excellence and Teaching and the Creative Teaching Grant. On the last Wednesday of each month, an award recipient will discuss his/her dream course or grant project. Registration is not required.

Laser Scanner Application in Historic Preservation

Michele Chiuini (Architecture) – Creative Teaching Grant

Wednesday February 23, 2011

3:00-4:00 pm

TC 412

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SERVICES SPOTLIGHT

MIDTERM FEEDBACK SERVICE

One of the most valuable ways to improve our teaching is with feedback from our students, but waiting until the end of the semester reduces its effectiveness. Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, and Scholarship (ITAS) is available to help you collect timely and valuable information from your students midway through the semester. This service is offered in two formats—facilitated or as an online survey through inQsit or Blackboard.

Facilitated

In this format, an ITAS staff member acts as a facilitator and leads a structured discussion in your class to gather feedback from your students. While you have to give up a class period (at least 45 minutes), you will gain valuable feedback on your teaching while there is plenty of time in the semester to make adjustments to the course. This process is meant to help you improve your teaching, not to serve as an evaluation tool, so the results are confidential—we don't report them to anyone but you.

Students respond well to this model since it allows them to openly discuss how the class is going, feeling comfortable with the anonymity of the process and the prospect for positive change in the class. Because the discussion is structured and facilitated, it turns complaints into constructive recommendations. What it takes from you is an openness to student suggestions, as well as a willingness to discuss the results with them afterwards.

Here's how it works:

Initial Meeting

You'll meet with a facilitator (typically an ITAS staff member) to discuss what kind of feedback you want from your students—certain aspects of your teaching, specific assignments, personal concerns, etc. We'll discuss the procedure and set up a date for the in-class discussion.

In-Class Discussion

On the day of the discussion, you'll briefly introduce the activity and the facilitator, and then you'll leave the room. The facilitator will break the class into small groups of 4-5 students and ask them to write individually for a few moments on the questions below. Then the groups will discuss their comments and decide on their top 2-3 answers for each question. Finally, each group will report out to the larger class and the facilitator will help the class decide on the top 3-5 answers to each question. The questions can vary, depending on the initial meeting, but typically follow this pattern:

- What about the class best helps you learn?
- What changes could the instructor make to improve your learning?
- What could you, as a student, do to improve the class?
- Other questions as determined in the initial meeting.

Report Writing and Results Meeting

After the facilitator gathers written and oral comments, he or she will prepare a short written report for you that highlights the results of the discussion, the student recommendations, and any other issues that arose during the class session (e.g. significant points of disagreement, etc.). You will then meet with the facilitator to discuss the report and possible actions or changes you might consider.

Follow-Up Class Discussion

After you have time to digest the report and consider changes—hopefully within a few days—you should discuss the results with your class. Most teachers will go through the list and talk about what changes they are willing to make, and what changes they cannot or will not make. . and why. That honest discussion is key to keeping the process open and productive.

Please note the following guidelines:

- We will offer this service during weeks six through ten of each semester, moving it any later makes meaningful changes more difficult.
- We expect that you will be able to meet with your facilitator within a week of the in-class session.

- We ask that you gather facilitated feedback on only one class per semester; our resources are limited, and so is your ability to adjust your teaching mid-semester without feeling overwhelmed.

If you are interested in having us help you with this type of midterm feedback, please [contact us](#) to schedule an initial meeting. If your department wishes to facilitate these sorts of activities on your own, we are happy to meet with you to discuss the procedure in more depth, and to share the materials we use.

Online Survey through inQsit or Blackboard

You can create a survey for your class to complete online through inQsit or Blackboard. While this format does not allow for a facilitator to assist students in thinking constructively, nor does it allow students to discuss the topic and hear what peers have to say, it does allow you to obtain feedback without taking class time to do so.

Information for creating your own online midterm feedback survey can be found on [our website](#):

- Midterm Feedback Online Survey – Timeframe, Sample Questions, & Follow-up
- Directions for creating a Midterm Feedback Survey
 - inQsit
 - Blackboard
- An example of a Midterm Feedback survey through inQsit

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EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Navigating the Human Subjects Review Process

Thursday, February 15th, 3:30-5:00 pm, TC 411

Facilitators: Chris Mangelli (Director of Research Compliance) and Melinda Messineo (Immersive Learning Committee)

Are you planning an immersive learning project? Are you interested in SoTL research? Do you conduct research projects in your class? This workshop will review the general principles of Human Subjects Review and provide a nuts and bolts overview of how the review process works at Ball State University. Presenters will cover everything from how to determine if a study requires IRB review to how to navigate CITI training, IRBnet, working with non-BSU clients and resubmission.

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UPCOMING EVENTS - February 2011

Tuesday, February 1

Visualizing Results with Tables in Microsoft Word	1:00-2:30pm	TC 405
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Wednesday, February 2

Video Conference Overview for Faculty, Staff, and Administrators	3:00-4:00 pm	BC 200
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Friday, February 4

inQsit – Creating online Surveys	9:00-10:30 am	TC 405
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Wednesday, February 9

Rubrics: Tools for Learning, Assessment, and Research (session 1 of 3)	9:00-10:30am	TC 411
WEBINAR – Change the Culture of Your Classroom: Connect with Your Students using i>clicker and Panopto	12:00-1:00 pm	
Blackboard: Q&A	4:00-5:00pm	TC 413G

Friday, February 11

Video Conference Overview for Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

3:00-4:00 pm BC 200

Tuesday, February 15

Introduction to EndNote 1:00-2:30 pm TC 405

Navigating the Human Subjects Review Process 3:30-5:00 pm TC 411

Wednesday, February 16

Rubrics: Tools for Learning, Assessment, and Research (session 2 of 3)

9:00-10:30am TC 411

Blackboard: Q&A 4:00-5:00 pm TC 413G

PANEL – Engaging Students in Online Instruction 4:00-5:00 pm TC 101

Wednesday, February 23

ITAS Colloquia Series – *Laser Scanner Application in Historic Preservation*, M. Chiuini

3:00-4:00 pm TC 412

Blackboard: Q&A 4:00-5:00 pm TC 413G

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